

**To: USDA Secretary Mike Johanns:**

We are owners and breeders of the alpaca. The alpaca is a member of the Camelidae family. Since the first importations of this fiber-bearing, non-food chain, livestock to the USA, the microchip, usually placed at the base of the left ear, has been used as the permanent form of identification. There are some alpacas who have ear tags, but these are not intended for the long term usage. The alpaca lives to be 18-25 years of age in the USA. Many of the first imports have been scanned in this last year and the implants are still emitting sure and correct identification numbers. One of the greatest assets we have is that registered alpacas are DNA typed for parentage. So, you can see that we are serious about our livestock and their identification.

At the last census of the Alpaca Registry, Inc, of the 61,000 registered alpacas, 51% of them have microchips. This shows an overwhelming desire as the form of identification of this species by the owners. This does not reflect the microchips that have been implanted in the new progeny of 2005, so it is popular opinion that the compliance rate is higher.

You will find that most alpaca owners and breeders are in full agreement that our animals need to be identified and we also agree that for the purpose of 48-hour trace back, this certainly meets the criteria.

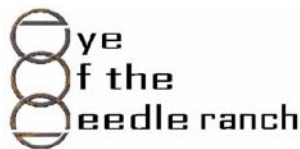
It is our desire to have you, USDA/APHIS, to approve the 125 kHz chip that is in all of our alpacas. In fact there are approximately 3.5 million animals in the USA with the AVID chip alone and most of us have already purchased readers for the 125kHz chip including the VETs we work with. Should there be another technology or another requirement of a 134 kHz chip for this species, we would think it appropriate for you to "grandfather" approval of those microchips that have already been implanted in our alpacas. This is our request that it be highly considered and approved for this livestock species.

Alpaca owners have been notified of the necessity to apply for the premise identification number. We have done this with my state Department of Agriculture and received our PIN.

The alpaca owner will have all three pieces of the identification number at hand. When I take my alpacas across the state line or when we need a Veterinarian Certificate of Inspection, the microchip is scanned and the number becomes part of that transport document.

We appreciate your consideration for us and our herd as well as our fellow farmers who care for this livestock in approving the current microchip that the alpaca farmer is using for permanent identification of this livestock.

Sincerely,  
Michel & Michelle Swango



Eye Of the Needle Ranch  
Alpacas & More  
Mike & Michelle Swango  
23900 Rockland Road  
Golden, CO 80401  
303-421-1939  
[www.eonranch.com](http://www.eonranch.com)  
[info@eonranch.com](mailto:info@eonranch.com)